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Editorial: Clerk's office flubs results

The front page of Thursday's newspaper had two stories by Tribune reporter George Myers that ran side by side. The juxtaposition had us scratching our heads as to the cause.

The top story was about the continuing, depressing downward trend of voter turnout, especially in off-year elections like this one. According to Howard County Clerk Kim Wilson, just 25.4 percent of eligible voters came out to the polls on Tuesday.

Below that, another story told the tale of the delay of Greentown's election results, which weren't available until 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, almost a full day after the polls closed Tuesday. In that story, Wilson blamed the delay on a miscommunication between her office and Greentown Town Clerk Teresa Duke. Wilson said Greentown officials usually hold their own election, but this year they had requested their council races be a part of the county's election process. She also said Greentown officials initially hand-count their votes instead of using the election count, as happens in Kokomo.

What's going on here? We need to straighten out what's happening at the Clerk's office. The next election is going to be even more difficult. If Wilson and her staff thought this was difficult to navigate, imagine how it's going to

look next November when the turnout is guaranteed to be higher due to the fact that it's a presidential election instead of just local races.

Not only that, but the county's election results website was taken down partway through Wednesday. And the way the results were posted Tuesday was problematic. We'd like to see a running tally by district as the results come in. On Tuesday, all we saw was a summary. That's it. Why can't we do that? The results come in by district, so why can't they be parsed as such when the information is presented to the public?

Election Day is on the calendar all year. Officials have ample time to prepare for this inherently busy day for local government. This sort of bungling is going to be a lot less tolerable when more voters make their way to the polls. We issue this reprimand only because we want to see our democracy function as smoothly as possible.